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ABSTRACT

Noting that the theory of international development is a paradigm, a model by which researchers guide their studies, this paper reviews various concepts of international development theory and proposes a research study that would examine mass media use in Georgia, one of the new republics born out of the death of the Soviet Union. The paper begins with a discussion of the information imbalance between wealthy countries and Third World countries, suggesting that an integral factor of the imbalance resides in the past with imperialism. The paper then discusses modernization and development concepts as realized in the economic and mass media of Third World nations. The paper next compares systems theory with the modernization and development model, and then discusses a modernization theory which embraces the concepts of systems theory. The paper also discusses dependency theory and convergence theory. Next, the paper presents a discussion of a possible research program to study the effects of the content of messages and their effects on attitudes and behavioral changes in Georgia. The paper concludes that an understanding of the information imbalances in the world and anticipating the consequences of world homogenization may stimulate further research. Contains 10 references. (RS)

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The Theory of International Development

By Lisa Zuchelli

ED 371 405

The theory of International Development involves the study of global information imbalances between rich, industrialized core countries and poorer periphery third world nations. The core countries consist of the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan and Australia. Periphery nations are poorer countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Information imbalances arise when the capacity to distribute, produce and access information is divided unevenly and is tied to global political and economic domination.

One main information source in the world is the ability to manufacture hardware systems. This ability remains ensconced in core countries. UNESCO, a subsidiary of the United Nations, relates how tipped the scale is in favor of core countries. Figures for the year 1984 reveal that:

- Only 4 percent of the world's computer hardware systems are owned by third world nations.
- Seventy-five percent of the worlds 700 million telephones can be found in the 9 richest countries
- The average radio ownership in the United States is 2,100, (per 1,000) while in third world countries it is 142.
- There is no television in 34 third world countries.
- While core countries average television 447 sets per 1,000, poorer countries have 36 per 1,000 (Hamelink, 219-220).

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These figures dramatically illustrate the huge information imbalances between the wealthy core countries and the peripheral, poorer third world nations.

Third world nations are actively seeking to develop capabilities to manufacture information hardware, such as computers, televisions and satellite systems for distribution of information. India has been active in this area and projected its computer sales demand would reach $862.5 million by 1990. One major problem derives from lack of investment capital in many third world countries. Investments usually come from large core based multi-national companies, "which target certain peripheral countries because of their authoritarian governments, economic incentives like tax privileges and low wages" (Hamelink, 220). Exports are in reality trade within the core based multi-national company. This helps to keep manufacturing knowledge within the company, and not imparted to the host country.

Information software includes the capability to access and produce information and to direct the flow of information. Since the core has most of the information producing software in the world, they have control over information flow. Therefore, information usually moves from the core to the third world nations. What information the core does receive from the periphery countries "consists of 'raw' unprocessed information ...while the core provides ready made information packages" (Hamelink, 221). This creates an information imbalance because the core countries only see information about third world nations that have been processed through core ideology. The

underdeveloped nations often receive information about themselves through media based in core countries, again influenced by western ideology and interests.

J. Larson, who conducted an analysis of network news coverage from 1972 through 1981, found that television networks covered the third world less than industrialized nations. He also found that what coverage there was, tended to be "crisis oriented (27 percent), defined as unrest/dissent; war, terrorism, crimes, coups, assassinations and disasters" (quoted, Shoemaker and Reese 45). It seems that the third world is only heard from when a calamity breaks out. Usually this news coverage is a concern because it affects the core nation's trade or political ties within the poorer nations. Meanwhile, core nation's news cover aspects of wealthy, powerful and influential elites with emphasis on consumerism and international trade relations. The worlds news is presented in an unbalanced and biased manner through the eyes of the richer core nations.

One might ask, how did the world acquire such an information imbalance? An integral factor of this problem reside in the past with imperialism. Imperialism involves maintaining control over raw materials and world markets by conquest of weaker countries, and establishing colonies to maintain control. Contemporary imperialism evolved in the 17th century when Portuguese and Spanish empires dominated the Western world. These empires were only interested in the economic exploitation of a dominated territory. Often these territories were coerced into initial submission and maintained by the use of military force.

By the 19th century, "...most of the world outside Europe and the Americas was formally partitioned into territories under the formal rule or informal political domination of one or another of a handful of states: mainly Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy the Netherlands, Belgium, the USA and Japan" (quoted, Mohammadi 270). This partitioning of the world's resources and markets into only a few states helped to launch the age of modern imperialism. "This form of direct political and administrative domination helped to create a truly planetary capitalistic economy in which economic transactions and flows of goods, capital and people now penetrated into the most remote regions. The world was fundamentally divided into strong and weak, advanced and backward areas" (quoted, Mohammadi 270).

During the twentieth century there have been numerous anti-colonial movements striding toward freedom and liberation by the territory states. In Africa, Zaire was liberated from Belgian rule in 1960 and Algeria became emancipated from the French in 1962. Meanwhile, India declared itself a free nation in 1947 (Mohammadi, 270). The liberation movement did not necessarily mean that the new nations were free from established global capitalistic domination. In fact, during the centuries of foreign rule many of the states had been subtly influenced by cultural imperialism. While imperialism is the subjugation and domination of one country by a more powerful one, cultural imperialism goes beyond economic and resource exploitation. Culture, embraces the concepts of the arts, philosophies, beliefs, values, industry, and classes. The use of political and economic power to glorify

and spread the values and habits of a foreign culture at the expense of a native culture could be devastating to a national identity. The peoples of the colonies became adapted to western values, beliefs, attitudes, life styles, religion and other western cultural norms. The cultural identity of the smaller nation states has been undermined by core domination.

As a result of this adaptation to western norms, cultural imperialism serves to spread capitalism as an economic system. This economic system can be seen as a form of cultural dominance that ultimately may produce a homogenized consumerism world culture. Many might ask what is it about a capitalistic homogenized global culture that is so bad? They might argue, is it not possible that wars and differences in opinions would disappear in a homogenized world society? Perhaps, but one concern is derived from the Neo-Marxist attitude that the world is beginning to look the same. "Cities worldwide are displaying uniform architectural styles" (Apter, 26). For example, airports and office buildings have an almost identical international style. Western music, styles of dress and the shift to consumerism are being emulated worldwide, the concern is that there seems to be a drift toward cultural convergence. Should we be concerned with this process and is it a form of dominance? Maybe so, if the capitalistic model is followed it seems that a global system of hierarchy and class divisions where the elite rule and the subclass suffers could develop.

The western ideology of economic development holds that there is only one way to be a successful competitor in the world

market. That way is to "emulate the process of development of western industrial capitalist societies" (Downing, Mohammadi, Sreberny-Mohammadi, 272). This process of modernization and development involves taking traditional and underdeveloped societies and establishing networks and institutions similar to those of advanced industrialized societies. These include norms of employment, values of social discipline and motivation techniques. It also encompasses the establishment of private and public property to include mass communication networks.

Modernization and development concepts are combinations of three basic conditions, economic growth, institutional development and technical sophistication. Information and communication are essential components for efficiency and freedom of choice in modern societies. "Freedom of the press, media power and cultural imperialism emerge from an economic condition" (Gibbons, 24). Conditions emerge from development and modernity which feeds on the inequities of the world market system where the third world is denied a fair share of the markets. This inequity was established by the colonial trade system that ensured the proliferation of "commerce and industry and the lines of communication assures it's viability" (Gibbons, 25). When liberation from domination occurred among many third world nations in the 20th century, the trade routes and lines of communication remained under control of the core nations. The main avenues of communication still originated in the core nations and despite their formal political independence, most third world countries still experienced neo-colonial

relationships. The flow of cultural products, the transfer of technology and the direction of the flow of information and communication all work to keep the third world nations off balance.

The modernization and development paradigm that dominated throughout the 1960's, is of an interdisciplinary nature, that includes anthropology, sociology, economic and political studies. The paradigm proposes that innovation, high productivity and growth will result in change and therefore more jobs and freedom of choices. The model represents democracy, systems of hierarchy, integration and utilizes a quantitative measure for growth. This measure for growth encompasses a per-capita measure over a short term. It excludes humanistic and cultural concepts and only measures aggregate income.

The model is a version of structural-functionalism and the systems theory (Gibbons, 32). Functionalism is based in biology and emphasizes how organized systems work to sustain themselves. Structuralism stresses how language and social systems are organized. The combination of these two approaches "results in a picture of a system as a structure of elements with functional relations" (Littlejohn, 14). Systems theory proposes that truth is derived from "thought and knowledge through observation and classification" (Littlejohn, 13). Systems theory is based on the idea that a system of interrelated parts work together and that one can not change one part of the system without affecting and changing the other parts in the system. The theory also involves the concept of hierarchy and sub systems that are imbedded in

larger systems. Systems try to maintain, regulate and adapt themselves through feedback in order to attain a state of homeostasis.

When studying a comparison of systems theory with the modernization and development model, one can see the parallels. The western modernization and the development process feature growth that emphasizes equilibrium maintenance, and the capacity of political and economic systems to survive under conditions of change by means of internal adaptation to the surrounding environment. In order for these principles to work, a "double market" system needs to evolve. Both market systems must be mutually beneficial and represent two ends of the spectrum. The economic market pertains to goods and services available to individuals, these services include access to a variety of media and information sources. The political market consists of citizens as voters, candidates and officeholders. This double market system gives choices of involvement in society. It is assumed that imbalances in the economic market place will be compensated by corrective policies in the political arena. The balance of power relies on the ability of the people to elect officials to political office. "The private sector will inhibit the concentration of public power while the public sector will remain responsible" (Apter, 24). The result is an interdependence system of hierarchies that work together regulated by the private sector through cybernetics in order to strive for homeostasis.

The concepts of systems theory has its critics. One critic is Fisher, who believes that the principles of the theory are so

abstract that they can be applied in multiple ways and may be in fact a model and not a theory at all. He believes that systems theory gives us little basis for understanding why things occur as they do and that it has no predicative powers (Littlejohn, 59). That it seems to describe only broad concepts that can be manipulated to fit a situation.

When applying concepts of system theory to the development model it is difficult to see how can equilibrium can exist in the political and economic arena when the main sources of information are controlled by the foreign elite. If the political market is to correct imbalances in the economic arena and maintain equilibrium, the people must have unlimited and unbiased access to information and media sources in order to make their choices. In reality the balance of power does not lie with the masses but in the hands of a select few.

During the 1980's David Apter developed modernization theory which embraces the concepts of systems theory. The theory is divided into two parts. The older concept is modernization I and the newer integrative theory is modernization II. Modernization I represents the changing roles and classes of the old traditional societies through the establishment of networks and institutions similar to those of advanced industrialized societies. The problem, Apter says, is that political and economic development adds western ideology in an attempt to secure the structural and behavioral components. The ideology embraces concepts of the profit motive in which man is believed to be primarily economically driven. It uses quantitative methods

of measuring growth on a per capita basis. The trickle-down theory is one of the main concepts. It was believed that the advantages of the elite in a developing country would eventually trickle down to the masses. The consequence of this approach, has the effect of reinforcing the countries state of periphery in the world market. One reason is because the elites are in reality foreign developers and information moguls, who are not interested in the growth of the host country but their own profits (Apter, 16).

Modernization II describes the contradictions of growth. In developing nations, labor force innovation is virtually halted, the breach between the classes widens and political controls begin to be based on a compensation. This outlook has stimulated an integrated assumption of modernization theory. It suggests that enlarging choices in jobs, and innovation stimulation will foster growth. "These and other concerns of modernization II are central to dependency theory" (Apter, 17).

Dependency theory deals with the negative social consequences of increasing production and reducing the labor force due to technological innovations. Thus, decreasing new employment opportunities and widening the gap between classes, and affecting the ability to make choices. Apter says that these problems appeared in highly modernized but not fully industrialized countries, which were proceeding under the development assumptions of modernization I. These countries were Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Chile (18).

Fernando Henrique Cardoso wrote a paper, in 1965, introducing the term "dependency theory". This new concept denies that dependent industry leads to economic stagnation. He was looking into theories about why development in post World War II years was turning into frustration for Latin American countries (Kahl, 136). Cardoso found that the old theories of the 1950's looked to external factors to explain non-development. The theories presupposed the existence of social groups in the countries that would stimulate the economy and help to move the country from a traditional stance to a modern one. The problem with this approach was that it implied a transitional period but did not fully investigate the internal factors involved.

Cardoso believes that his dependency perspective is more useful in Latin America, than the structural-functional approach that has been dominating research until recent years. Kahl deduced that the old structural-functional approach has not been matched by any real events. Kahl says that the old economic centers have retained their political power long after their days of productiveness. They are reluctant to give up a profitable sector for the benefit of the people (177).

Cardoso's perspective is a form of Marxism that uses imperialism as the explanation for the trend of events. Kahl states, "Both concepts (structural-functionalism and dependency theory) are more questions than theories; it is a misunderstanding in my view to think that you can solve problems in terms of dependency" (177). Cardoso concept looks inside each developing country and explains change in terms of actions taken

by various groups that are based on their own interests and not a response to external stimuli. However, he also looks at the economic conditions of the world market, world power centers and their link to forms of distribution within the developing country. He combines the old paradigm with concepts of imperialism. He looks outside for influence but also at the internal workings of the developing nation in order to understand how change is implemented (Kahl, 157).

Cardoso's approach to dependency seems to follow the path of Cynthia Lont and Warren Decker's disempowered paradigm which prescribes a holistic approach to an issue. The paradigm emphasizes process rather than structure and does not concentrate on end products. It stresses an investigation into the process of interconnections and not into strict order or hierarchy. It accepts a diverse methodology of gathering information to include qualitative and non-conforming data. Most importantly, the disempowered paradigm accepts new theories and believes that they can exist side by side.

The old paradigm, or empowered paradigm, is the opposite. It seems to follow along the guidelines of Apter's modernization I theory. It states that patterns exist and are assumed to be constant and that the patterns may be studied in small components, taken out of context, looked at and put back again. This approach does not look at the whole process. The empowered paradigm also assumes that people are reliable in their reasoning processes and does not value individual fluctuations. The paradigm does not accept other theories, if a new theory arrives

in a certain field then the old one must be cast off. It sees things in a black and white manner and does not incorporate new ideas in order to grow and evolve as does the disempowered paradigm.

Since the new paradigm accepts multiple theories to study, it seems that Cardoso and Apter would be open to explore and possibly adopt some of the concepts of Lawrence Kincaid's convergence theory. This theory attempts to explain how beliefs and attitudes are subtly changed through mass media exposure. Kincaid's theory expounds that cultures may be viewed as open systems that seek to sustain themselves by communication. This transfer of information creates a network between people and connects groups to one another. "Society consists of connected groups that cluster together according to common beliefs, values and behaviors" (Littlejohn, 57).

Different groups initially do not have common beliefs, but when they communicate and transfer information they come to share, to converge. The homogenization of western culture seems to follow the convergence theory. As people with in a group or society share beliefs, values and ideas they become more similar. The problem with this theory, in development, is that the convergence is lop-sided. The powerful core nations have undermined the weaker, developing nations cultural heritage so that the attainment of western cultural norms and the concepts of consumerism have become the ideal. However, the core nations do not absorb and integrate the cultural norms of third world

nations into their society. It is a one way flow, from core to periphery.

This western ideal encompasses capitalism, global markets and information systems. The imbalance of information flow from core to the third world propagates a glorifying of the core nations and masks reality. The prepackaging of information makes this possible. The notion that American streets are paved with gold and everyone is rich is fostered by this packaged flow of information. The realities of an under class of homeless or otherwise destitute people, a rapidly shrinking middle class and an ever richer elite class is masked. Also, the reverse flow of information mainly dwells on the negative aspects of a third world nation and how these aspects might affect the richer core countries.

It seems the convergence theory has a few loop-holes. The convergence is at the expense of one culture. A contributing factor of this loss of indigenous culture lies with the control of information flow, which is in the hands of a few rich media moguls who dominate the world's mass media. As the world approaches the 21st century only five media corporations dominate the worlds information services. The big five are Time Warner, Inc., Bertelsmann AG, News Corporation Ltd., Hachette SA, and Capital Cities/ABC. Time Warner, Inc. is the largest magazine publisher in the United States with a world wide readership of 120 million. It runs the second largest record company and television cable operation in the world. Bertelsmann AG is a German firm that specializes in book clubs and publishing. News

Corporation, Ltd. is Australian based and has the highest newspaper circulation in the world. In Australia, News Corporation, Ltd. controls two-thirds of all newspaper circulation, in New Zealand and England one-half of all circulation. They also own the largest satellite television system in Europe and control Fox Broadcasting and 20th Century C-Fox studio. Just one of their magazines has a circulation of 17 million. Hachette SA, is the world's largest producer of magazines and is the worlds largest publisher of reference books. Capital Cities/ABC owns eight local television and twenty-one radio stations. It also owns nine daily newspapers, ESPN Cable Sports channel and publishes 30 magazines (Bagdikian 805-820).

"True freedom requires three conditions: the opportunity to read and watch anything available; a diversity of sources from which to choose; and media systems that provide access for those who wish to reach their fellow citizens" (Bagdikian, 812). In the core countries the first condition is generally met. However, the media giants are limiting the accessibility of the other two. In the rest of the world all three conditions are severally limited.

All of these concepts are just that, concepts. However, if one desires to garner evidence that these theories do indeed exist in our world today, one must conduct a research study. The study may take the concepts of modernization, development and dependency and look into the development process of one of the new republics born out of the death throes of the Soviet Union. The new state of Georgia for example, dwelled under the iron fisted rule of the Soviet Union and her communication networks,

and political and market systems. These systems were radically different from those of capitalistic societies. Now that the Soviet Union has broken up, many of the states are seeking to emulate the apparent success of capitalism.

While the influence of colonial imperialism from western nations was not a dominating factor in Georgia, today the more subtle form of western cultural imperialism is most assuredly occurring. A research study could be set up to investigate the influence of capitalism on the evolution of the double market system; a major component of the theory of modernization. The influence of the economic system with its distribution of goods and services, particularly information services and communication networks, could be studied to see if an equilibrium occurs when the political market stabilizes. This study should include both outside influences and those that come from within. A study of the effect of the media/communication empires on concepts of democracy and capitalism in this new state could encompass how the flow of information effects voting habits and economic regulation. One outcome may be that since the media giants control the public image of national leaders, they as a result will fear and favor the giant's political agendas. Also, since they also control the information and entertainment networks that help to establish the social, political and cultural attitudes of the populace, will a bias toward western ideals develop? Will these factors help to homogenize the culture of Georgia? Will it make it easier to consumerize the populace?

One aspect would be to watch for the national equilibration of market forces. Will the new economic and political groups, as they begin to expand and operate, develop equalizing forces in order to maintain a balance of power? A natural assumption could be that economic changes will be gradual and steady and in turn will produce gradual and steady modernization of social and political institutions. In order to maintain control over public and private sectors there must be access to mass communication networks to all citizens of all classes. Unfortunately, the exterior economic aspirations may cause a disparity between the two market forces and help to create wide class divisions and limit information accessibility.

There are numerous ways to study the effects of modernization on a new and evolving nation. One is to analyze the activities of media personnel as they create messages and to study the contexts of those messages. One must also study the content of the messages and their apparent effects on attitudes. The investigation of the relationship between the media and western ideology and that of the private and public sectors may also be studied through media studies. Finally, a look into the theory of homogenization of cultural aspects may be studied. Are the people fiercely fighting to retain their cultural autonomy or are they embracing the western cultural ideology?

Out of this wide range of possible studies one may choose the concepts of Media Studies to research the effects of the content of messages and their effects on attitudes and behavioral changes. Media studies looks at media as a channel for the

transmission of information to an audience. One must think of an audience as interpretive with its own constructs for what is mediated. "Interpretive communities come into being around specific media and content" (Littlejohn, 232). Communities share patterns of understandings of the content of media. If one wants to discover how media affects a certain audience one must understand the culture of that particular audience. So particular attention must be paid to the study of Georgian culture before the study may be implemented.

Thomas Lindlof describes three dimensions of analyzing a community. Content analysis looks at the types of programs and meanings derived from them. A community shares common meanings from content. Interpretative analysis looks at members of a community and the impact upon behaviors. Social action analysis investigates shared sets of behaviors toward the media in a community. It looks at how, when and where the media was consumed and how it affects the conduct of the members of the community (Littlejohn 233).

The research study may be implemented by first analyzing media content both originating from within the state of Georgia and from outside. According to Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese, there are four important functions that communication serves in any society:

1. Surveillance, news content falls into this category. News is useful to provide information about threats, financial activities and catastrophes.

2. Correlation is associated with surveillance and includes editorial, propaganda activity and persuasion. A look into the content can give some insight into the political stance of the people in power and those who have vested interests in that power.
3. Transmission is the conveyance of perceived norms of society.
4. Entertainment provides a sense of gratification, relaxation and enjoyment.

All four of these functions help to reinforce the ideology of the members of the dominating classes and to reinforce the attitudes of the people.

One way to study the influence of media content in Georgia is to look at the archives before the Soviet Union broke up and investigate what types of media was broadcast to the public. A look at the productions of drama and news casts may provide insights into cultural rituals and prevailing ideology of Soviet Georgia. An investigation must also include the quantitative aspects. This range of information will include the number of seconds a television program focuses on a particular subject and when it was broadcast. Also a look at the newspapers and number of inches given to particular stories may provide insights, was it objective, persuasive, or heavily ideological laden?

The next step would be to compile information on the behaviors, attitudes and beliefs and actions of these qualities, for example buying habits. This may be accomplished by looking at

import records, store books, government records, old media productions, news casts and interviews with the populace.

Next a study in the same vein would be conducted with current media content. A look at the content of the messages and the underlying cultural themes should be measured to see if the content has changed. If it has changed, a look at how it has changed will be provide insight into how the system has evolved.

Surveys would be performed to find who is listening to what message through what channel and with what results. A large enough sample should be compiled in order to give an unbiased result. The survey would be performed door to door (not everyone has a telephone) and would include questions regarding attitudes, values, beliefs about the media and political figures and the future state of the economy. Questions regarding buying habits would be asked. One of the lines of questioning should encompass whether or not the people felt they have any more power over the political system than they did prior to the break up. Do they feel the they are represented and listened to or do they feel that things have not changed much since the break up?

The people surveyed would be asked to keep a diary, for a small remittance. After one year, another interview would take place. Meanwhile, another quantitative and qualitative measurement would determine if the content of media coverage had changed in the same time frame. The two surveys would then be compared to see if content change had affected the peoples buying habits. Also the attitudes towards political figures and towards

the future of the state of the economy would be determined to see if change had occurred during the past year.

Applying old and new approaches to the field of international development has the ability to generate virtually unlimited research. One advocate for the merging of the old and new paradigms was Paul Lazerfeld. His original approach reduced the communication process into four categories; who, said what, to whom, and with what effect. This four question scheme became the dominant paradigm in the post war era. The Lazerfeld model represented the logical-positivism approach of the Vienna Circle, which was influenced by Albert Einstein and Ernst Mach. However, it restricted research along narrow avenues.

Realizing the shortfalls of Lazerfeld's original approach, a group of scholars from the Frankfurt School started a new line of communication research. These scholars were concerned with the value and ideological images in media content. They addressed long term and subtle implications of the implicit themes in the media.

Lazerfeld saw that the two theories should work in tandem. It was his hope to "develop a convergence of European theory and American empiricism" (quoted, Jowett and O'Donnell 128). It seems that Cardoso and Apter would agree with Lazerfeld and are working to combine the two paradigms. Eventually, a new outlook on international development may emerge.

The validity of development theory is evident in the way the historical facts and their relationship to current world market systems have evolved. The study of the world's economic and

communication networks is also important, in order to grasp basic understanding of how our world operates today. Development theory is not a simple theory. However, the world is by no means simple either. It makes sense to have a theory that is open and that integrates the sciences in order to study a broad range of phenomena. A simple and logical explanation may not suffice in the international development field.

In conclusion, the theory of international development is not a theory, it is a paradigm, a model by which researchers guide their studies. International development model seems to have originated in structural-functionalism and logical-positivism and is evolving towards a critical school of thought. The merging of these two concepts should generate a multitude of research in the international development field. An understanding of the information imbalances in the world and anticipating the consequences of world homogenization may stimulate further research.

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